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H – 1024

International Court of Justice

H1024 – 0001

H1024 - 0002

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

15 July 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Colonel A. M. S. Neave

POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission convened at 1620 hours.)

[illegible]

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: Dr. Link, before we start, the program for this evening and tomorrow is that we will hear this witness, Wegscheider, and then you want Kaufmann after that, and that will be the last of the witnesses for the Corps of Political Leaders?, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have a considerable number of SA witnesses to hear during this week and that the time limit rule will have to be very strictly adhered to.

DR. LINK: During the last conference it was mentioned that we could make use of the first two days of this week. If we would shorten the hearings of Wegscheider and Kaufmann,(the latter one is merely to be introduced here to to speak and will be heard before the Tribunal anyway,) to such an extent that we will be finished by tomorrow noon, would it be permissible to introduce a third witness tomorrow?

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: No. In any case I did not say that you could have two whole days. I said that your witnesses would be taken during the first two days and then we would go on to the SA. You see we have got to consider that the SA have had very few witnesses and we must give them an opportunity to hear them as soon as possible whereas, from what I understand from Dr. Servatius, he is entirely satisfied that he has received a full quota of witnesses when Kaufmann

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has been heard.

HANS WEGSCHEIDER, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q What is your name?

A Hans Wegscheider.

Q Raise your right hand and repeat this oath after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

THE COMMISSIONER: You may sit down.

[illegible]

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DR. LINK: I am introducing the witness, Hans Wegscheider, as the type of the rural Ortsgruppenleiter and I also want to hear him pertinent to 6 A 1 and 3 of the Trial Brief of the 13th of March. Does the Commissioner desire a more detailed explanation?

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: No I don't think so. Go on.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. LINK:

Q Will you please give us your age?

A I will be 61 in October.

Q What is your profession?

A Smith.

Q Where are you from?

A I come from Hirschdorf, Gemeinde, St. Lorenz, Allgau.

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Q What kind of a population is there?

A That is a purely rural population, farmers and workers.

Q When did you join the Party?

A On the 28th of March 1933.

Q How did that happen?

A There was a meeting and the Ortsgruppe was established.

Q There you joined the Party?

A Yes.

Q And there were with you several other people from your locality?

A About 60 of them.

Q Did you used to belong to another party formerly?

A I was with the Bavarian Farmers and Middle Classe League.

Q Was that a Middle Class Party?

A It was a Middle Class Party.

Q And why did you transfer from the Bavarian Middle Class League to the National Socialist Party?

A Because at that time the Farmer's League, the so-called Middle Class League was too small and because the unemployment figure was rising I and my fellow citizens were imbued by the thought that only from one Party could there come help for Germany and for the Germans.

Q When did you become Ortsgruppenleiter?

A At that meeting, on the same day, I was appointed Ortsgruppenleiter, that is on the 28th of March 1933.

Q There were no Party Members there formerly?

A No.

Q How did it happen that you were the one to be picked.

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A At that time already the suggestion was made by the largest part of the assembled people.

Q Were you known as a "noise-maker" because you were made Ortsgruppenleiter or do you wish to say that you had acquired the confidence of your fellow citizens.

A My fellow citizens had confidence in me. I was leading several societies, for instance sport societies. As early as 1929 it was only the lack of 3 votes which prevented by becoming Burgomeister.

Q Later on did you become Burgomeister?

A On the 15th of April, that is to say in the middle of April, I not only had the votes of the NSDAP but also 4 Social Democratic votes and one Bavarian Peoples' Party vote and so within the Community Council I was elected Burgomeister.

Q That was also in 1933?

A Yes, in 1933.

Q And you have had both functions uninterruptedly, that of Burgomeister and that of Ortsgruppenleiter, up to the collapse?

A Yes.

Q Did you, because of your profession or because of other circumstances, get around a great deal?

A Because of my profession, I am a specialist in horse-shoeing, and furthermore since I am a "Heilpraktiker" (osteopath for animals), I got around a good deal.

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: Dr. Link, can't we go on to the question of the Corps of Political Leaders now? I think we have heard quite enough about his personal background.

Q All I want to know from you now, witness, is whether what I have asked regarding Ortsgruppenleiter is also true of all the other Ortsgruppenleiter in rural districts and areas?

A Yes, for the greatest part it may possibly be correct.

H1024-0006

Q Did you have more to do as an Ortsgruppenleiter or as a Burgomeister?

A I was much more occupied as Burgomeister than in my capacity as Ortsgruppenleiter.

Q Will you please describe to the Commission very briefly how your Ortsgruppe was organized, what your aids were?

A On that same day the staff of the Ortsgruppe was organized.

Q How many people were there?

A There was the Kassenleiter, there was one person for organization and propaganda leiter and a training leiter.

Q You did not have any more?

A Then we appointed a Cell and Block Leiter with them.

Q I suppose the Kassenleiter took care of the money part. What did the Organization Leiter do?

A The main activity of the Organization Leiter was to take care of invitations for the meetings, to rent the hall, and similar things.

Q What did the Training Leiter do?

A I couldn't assign much work to the Training Leiter because he became a party member only on the 28th of March 1933 and himself had received no training.

Q Why did you put up a Training Leiter?

A Because the Kreisleitung demanded it.

Q How many Blockleiter did you have?

A There were 8 Blockleiter.

Q Always 8 from 1933 to 1945?

A During the war years every once in a while there were only 6.

Q And Cell Leiter?

A 2.

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Q What did the Block and Cell Leiters do?

A Every one of the Cell Leiter had to care for 4 Blocks. The Block Leiter paid the membership dues to the Cell Leiter. The Cell Leiter distributed informational material to ~~ex~~ every Block Leiter.

Q What kind of information or material?

A For instance training letters and posters.

Q And the Block Leiter?

A The Block Leiter distributed them to the members while taking in membership dues.

Q Is that all the Block Leiters did, taking in the membership dues and distributing these training letters?

A Since in the Algau there is not a close community but a dispersed settlement in the Algau fashion I had to also utilize the Block Leiter for community work.

Q What sort of a meeting did you hold in your Orts Gruppe?

A From 1933 to 1938-1939 I held 3 large meetings. However these were mostly of a community character because the population wanted to be informed regarding the finances of the community. Other meetings which had to be held were ordered by the Kreis and they sent lecturers there.

Q How frequently did these meetings, ordered by the Kreis, take place?

~~Lesser~~
A There was mostly one in fall and one in spring.

Q Why so few?

A Our Kreisleiter himself was against these meetings and he stressed the point that our rural population, which had to work so hard during the summer months, could not be asked to attend meetings too.

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Q What happened in these meetings ordered by the Kreis?

A Mostly the Kreis lecturers and Gau lecturers clarified the new events of the National Socialism to the population. They also explained to them events in agricultural and in the farmer organizations.

Q In connection with these meetings, which were open to the public, did you have any special discussions with your political leiter staff?

A There were monthly roll-calls. However they did not take place either in the summer or in the fall so that the collection of dues which was to take place there finally took place at the house of the treasurer due to the severe working hours. Then there were meetings for the Block Warte and all the other Warte of the organizations. In the fall it took place to introduce the winter relief work and in the summer for the introduction of the summer relief work, that is the collection for the Red Cross.

Q I am less interested in meetings which were public meetings where such things as red cross collections and so on were discussed than I am in those meetings which you held specifically with your political leiter, that is to say with your block and cell leiter and your three men or the Ortsgruppe.

A These took place perhaps every half year.

Q And what was discussed there?

A My block and cell leiter were mostly interested in events of the community and I wanted to hear what was going on and what it looked like in the individual blocks outside. What I wanted to know was the reaction of the population as to the practicability of the execution of such directives as the breeding directive, the milk control, and so on, so that I could report to higher authorities whether these directives were practicable or not.

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Q And how about the roll-calls which you attended in your capacity as Ortsgruppenleiter at the Kreis or at the Gau? How about those?

A Ortsgruppenleiter conferences took place only on Kreis level.

Q How often?

A On the ~~xxx~~ average of twife a year.

Q What did the Kreisleiter say there?

A The Kreisleiter wanted to hear from the individual Ortsgruppenleiter what it looked like outside in their districts.

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: Dr. Link, before you go on, will you explain what this line of examination is supposed to be showing? We have heard a great deal of this before from other withesses and I want to know what your point is, what is the point you are trying to make by describing these meetings?

DR. LINK: It is the first Ortsgruppenleiter we hear and he will be the only one. My intentionswith this line of questioning are that I want to exhaust the possibilities which may indicate a possible conspiracy in the sense of the prosecution by these people meeting and discussing matters. Furthermore, I want to present what these people here, as recognizable groups, knew regarding the aims and goals of the State Leadership, whether they were honorable or not, so that the larger group could be charged with knowing about these things.

COMMISSIONER NEAVE: Very well. I think we might adjourn at this point and continue the examination tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. I would like to remind the Prosecution that the hearing of affidavits will be continued tomorrow. At 10 o'clock will be the General Staff and at 2 o'clock Political Leaders. Wednesday there will be the SS. As I have already stated, the next witness here will be Kaufmann for Political Leaders who was, I think, a Gau Leiter. That will close the list of witnesses for the Corps of Political Leaders.

(The Commission adjourned until 16 July 1946 at 1000 hours.)

* * * * * * * * * * * *

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The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of HANS WEGSCHEIDER, taken on 15 July 1946.

Mabel A. Lesser
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

Commissioner

H1024-0011

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DY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q What is your name?

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CERTIFIED TO:

A.M.S. Neave Lt. C.
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